

in the various relations of teacher, hospital physician, and friend ;— one of whom it may be truly said, that while he was eminently conspicuous as a successful and able Professor, he was not less distinguished by his candour, straightforward conduct, scrupulous honour, and unswerving rectitude.—J. H. B.

Dr. J. W. Meigen.—This celebrated entomologist died in his 82nd year, on the 11th of last July, at Stolberg, near Aix-la-Chapelle.—*Bot. Zeitung*, Sept. 12.

SHOWER OF DUST AT ORKNEY.

Sandwick Manse, Sept. 19, 1845.

On the morning of the 3rd inst. there was a fall of dust resembling Roman cement over all Orkney, and probably Jutland also ; at least it extended as far as Lerwick, the capital of these islands, as it fell on the sails of a French sloop-of-war which was in that bay at the time ; and by all the intelligent people here as well as there, it is thought to be of volcanic origin, and to be the produce of a burning mountain in Iceland.

We were disposed to ascribe it to Mount Hecla then, but the French officers and *savans*, who had just returned from Iceland, think it more probable that it is from another mountain, which, though not so celebrated as Hecla, was threatening an eruption when they left that country. I have not yet heard of its extending to other counties in Scotland, but think there is little doubt of the fall of some on the N.E. of Caithness, whether observed or not. Some people in different parts of Orkney had clothes out bleaching on the preceding night, and they were not a little distressed to find them covered with the dust next morning ; but it seemed so much like common dust from a road, that they were more disposed to blame their neighbours for the trick than Hecla, or any of its neighbours. I am told that it was observed floating on the surface of the sea that morning, and it could be collected from flag-stones, glass, or leaves of cabbage, and other plants, for some days after. I do not know the duration of the fall, but a medical man who had occasion to be out between 3 and 4 o'clock that morning was much distressed with the dust in his eyes and on his face, which could not have arisen from the ground, as it was too wet at the time ; and it also fell on board of ships and fishing-boats, much to the annoyance of the fishermen. Iceland lies about 500 miles N.W. of this, and the wind for some days previous had been from that quarter. This may appear a long way for the ashes to be carried through the air, but such cases are not unprecedented, and Dr. Barry, in his 'History of Orkney,' mentions a similar occurrence about eighty years ago, which was known by the name of "the black snow." The weather for several days before was fine ; the barometer being high and steady, about 30·27, and the daily average height of the thermometer from 57 to 52. Some people observed a sulphureous smell in the atmosphere a few days before.

C. CLOUSTON.